



# Spark Gap

Vol. 38, Issue 4, April 2021 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for thirty-eight years*

## The Club meeting is this Saturday (4/17) at 8 am.

For those who feel comfortable meeting in person, our **March and April MARC monthly meetings will be held at New Hope Church, located at 5307 W Fairview Rd Greenwood IN 46142** - on Fairview just west of Morgantown road. Testing will also take place at New Hope Church unless otherwise specified by the VEC. Masks will be required.

We will meet in the Activity Center located through the lower level doors (northwest corner of the building, by the flagpole), left then right, across from the gym. Testing will occur in a room across and down the hall.



The meeting will also be carried on the Club's 2M repeater as we have in the past. Due to difficulty hitting the repeater directly from this location, we will cross-band repeat using our own HT radios on UHF to my vehicle at the church to relay our HT signals to the MARC 2M VHF repeater. This has been successfully tested from 1-5 watts HT output. If you plan to attend in person, **please bring an HT programmed for the Simplex frequency 445.875 MHz (no PL tone)** to use when you speak at the meeting, so repeater only listeners can hear. The backup frequency will be 445.825 MHz (no PL tone). These are cross-band repeat frequencies recommended by the Indiana Repeater Council.

Due to COVID-19, no coffee or donuts will be provided. ? sorry.

See you Saturday.

73,

Tim **WC9G**



## BIRTHDAYS FOR APRIL 2021

**N9RJC – Randy Carter**

**KD9FHI – Robert Cloutier**

**KI6QOG – Jacki Frederick**

**KD9OQC – Richard Szepski**

## The Indiana QSO Party is Saturday May 1, 2021

Please plan to participate and add the club call to the Cabrillo format export from an electronic log. The party runs for 12 hours beginning 1500 UTC on May 1 on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10-meter amateur bands.

Rules Link: <http://hdxcc.org/inqp/rules.html>

Objective: For Amateurs worldwide to contact as many stations in Indiana as possible on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meter Amateur bands.

Contest Exchange:

- Indiana stations send RS(T) plus Indiana county.
- Non-Indiana stations in the USA and Canada send RS(T) and state, province or territory.
- All others (DX) send RS(T) only or RS(T) plus "DX"

Club Competition:

In addition to individual awards, there is an award for the Indiana Amateur Radio Club whose members turn in the highest total aggregate score. The top scoring station in each category receives a plaque.

Log Submissions:

- Computer generated logs must be submitted as an ASCII text file with Cabrillo format strongly preferred. Send logs via e-mail to: [inqp@hdxcc.org](mailto:inqp@hdxcc.org). NOTE: This address is for logs only. Do not use it for any other purpose.

I am told that W9MID had 4 participants last year, and was in the top 10 for Indiana. If you don't have software, N3FJP has a free log program for IN in state: <http://www.n3fjp.com/programs/QSOIN.exe>

Please participate even if for a part of the time.

73,  
Tim

## Divine Inspiration at MARC meeting

The Mid-State ARC is definitely a radio club on the move.

Thanks to a little divine inspiration we held our first 2021 face to face meeting in March. Club President Tim WC9G, arranged for a large meeting room and a separate VE testing room at New Hope Church located on west Fairview Road.

Eighteen club members wearing masks spaced themselves out around the room as Tim and other board members conducted the meeting live and via 2-meter radio. About a dozen check-ins on the repeater indicated club members were listening.



Simulcasting on the repeater required a little radio magic. Tim brought in his dual band Emconn radios which transmitted via a simplex UHF frequency to his car, thru a crossband radio, to the repeater. It was not possible to hit the repeater directly from the basement meeting room. Club members used their HT on the UHF channel as they responded in the meeting. This method worked quite well and eliminated passing a mic around the room.



Following the meeting Jacki KI6QOG and the VE team tested three candidates for their Technician Class license. The separate, very quiet testing room, produced three new hams.





Meanwhile, back down the hall, several club members talked about Tim, WC9G's crossband set up. Chris Mazzarella demonstrated his satellite antenna while other groups discussed post meeting topics.

The April 2021 meeting will be held at New Hope church. Bring your HT so you too can address the masked crowd and the folks at home. As Covid restrictions are lifted we hope to return to the REMC Headquarters meeting room this summer.



Photos and text by Jack W8ISH



## 2021 World Amateur Radio Day is April 18

**What:** 2021 World Amateur Radio Day

**Who:** All amateur radio operators worldwide

**When:** Sunday, April 18, 2021 at 0000 UTC until Monday, April 19, 2021 at 0000 UTC

**Where:** A global event covering all regions of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU)





## Next General class starts Monday, May 3, 2021

Hi--

*I'm sorry about this second email, but the start date in the first paragraph of the last email was incorrect.*

The next online General Class will start on Monday, May 3, 2021. It will consist of eight, two-hour sessions starting at 9 pm EDT (6pm PDT) and running until 11 pm EDT (8pm PDT). The eight sessions will take place on the following dates:

- Monday, May 3
- Thursday, May 6
- Monday, May 10
- Thursday, May 13
- Monday, May 17
- Thursday, May 20
- Monday, May 24
- Thursday, May 27

The cost is \$40 for adults. High school and college students can attend for free. If you're a student, all you have to do to register is send an email to [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com) stating that you want to take the class. All others can register using PayPal or Amazon Pay .

I'll be using my  It's available as an ebook, paperback book, or audiobook.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

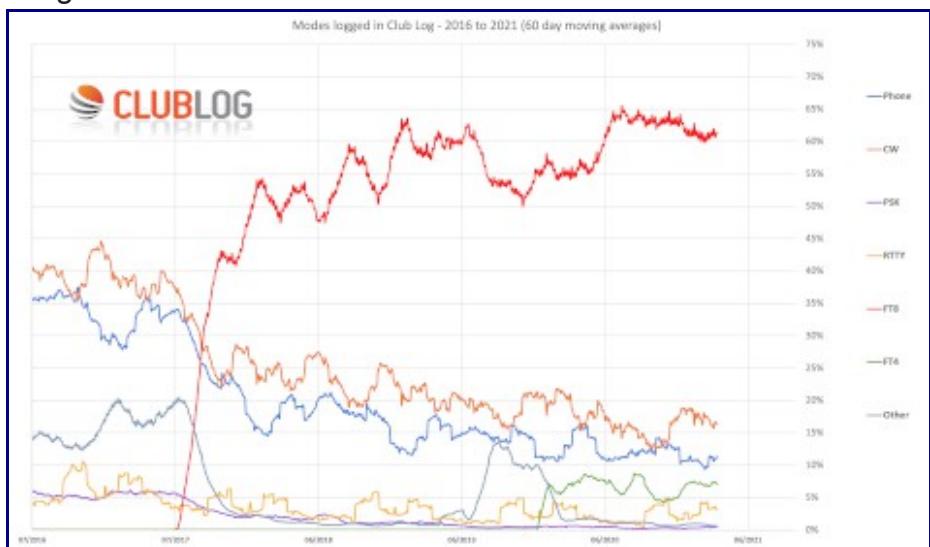
Dan KB6NU

## FT8 Accounts for Nearly Two-Thirds of HF Activity

Since zooming to prominence after its debut in mid-2017, the popular FT8 digital protocol has become the mode of choice for some 60% of HF operators, according to Club Log's latest [activity report](#) compiled by Michael Wells, G7VJR. FT8 is one of the protocols in the [WSJT-X](#) suite of free programs. Wells says FT8 activity level sits at nearly 85% on 6 meters. The dramatic FT8 upswing has come at the expense of phone, CW, RTTY, PSK, and other modes. Over the same period, the number of FT8 contacts logged each year per active call sign has continued to climb to about 60% between 2015 and 2021, with the most dramatic increase being nearly 29% in the past year. The use of all other modes has continued to flutter downward since the advent of FT8, which occupies vastly less spectrum than the more traditional ham radio operating modes.

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of contacts logged per day by Club Log users has trended steadily upward, regardless of mode. The report draws on data of more than 84,000 logs uploaded to the Club Log site -- some 730 million contacts in all.

Wells reported that in 2025, the "typical call sign" logged 620 CW contacts, 558 SSB contacts, and 372 data (digital) contacts. Five years later, the statistics were 500, 300, and 1,700, respectively.



ARRL's Logbook of The World (LoTW) does not typically report this level of detail as far as mode usage is concerned, but the statistics available certainly confirm FT8's increasing popularity. The rocketing usage of FT8 over the past few years may be demonstrated most dramatically by a comparison in contacts-by-mode statistics between March 2017 and March 2018, when FT8 contact numbers in the hundreds shot to some 2.6 million contacts by the following year -- an increase of nearly 1 million percent.

From mid-2019 to mid-2020, FT8 usage appears to have slumped slightly to 50% before climbing back to 60%. FT8 usage peaked at just over 65% in late 2020 and has held steady at 60 - 65% since.

The same period saw SSB usage dip by 15%, CW activity by 10%, and RTTY by 29%. Introduced later, FT4, the contest mode of FT8, also showed an initial fast upward trajectory, before steadyng at 5 - 8%.

Named after its developers, Steven Franke, K9AN, and Joe Taylor, K1JT, FT8 indicates the mode's eight-frequency shift-keying format. Tones are spaced at 6.25 Hz, and an FT8 signal occupies just 50 Hz. .... ARRL News April 2021

## The Appropriate Use of Lingo in The Voice Modes

A point was raised by another operator last night about the proper terms to use on the amateur bands. The amateur bands are an inclusive area and a certain amount of freedom to use individual examples of terminology has always been a hallmark of the hobby. Having said that, however, there are good reasons to use a certain amount of standardized terms. Particularly when we are participating in disaster communications, this concept becomes vital. Even in non-emergency communications, however, the use of standard phrases makes the information we are attempting to convey easier to understand.

First, and foremost in my mind, is CLARITY. We want our message, be it a call sign, a name, or a location to be clearly heard and understood by the other operator. If we use terms or phonetics of our own design, we risk having the person listening to us get confused or get the message incorrect. For this reason alone we as operators should learn, use and stick to the accepted phonetic alphabet as published by the ARRL and other radio organizations.

Second, the use of terms peculiar to another service, such as "Personal" when we mean "Name", mark us to other operators, sometimes unfairly. Here again, the ARRL has stated in many publications, that the use of misunderstood "lingo" is poor operating practice. Even the ubiquitous "Q" signs of CW are not appropriate to phone operations. Their original purpose, as a kind of shorthand that shortened the time necessary to send a message in Morse Code, still exists, but ONLY in Morse Code. The use of QRM or QTH may be very frequent on the voice ham bands since most operators know the meaning of these terms, but a few operators insist on using arcane Q signs. All this does is confuse the other operator. If these individuals are doing this to make it appear that they are super hams, they should stop. All it does is irritate the rest of us, and slow the passage of information down due to having to repeat the term in plain English. Why not do it in plain English to begin with.

Third, as the operator who brought the subject up noted, we are under observation very often. Government agencies, relief organizations, law enforcement, fire and EMS entities are the very clients we serve when disaster strikes. We, as radio operators, must be cognizant of how we present ourselves to these agencies. That means being as professional as we can while we do our "thing", Radio Communications.

As a reminder to all amateur radio operators, here is the phonetic alphabet in its proper form, courtesy of the ARRL. ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, DELTA, ECHO, FOXTROT, GOLF, HOTEL, INDIA, JULIET, KILO, LIMA, MIKE, NOVEMBER, OSCAR, PAPA, QUEBEC, ROMEO, SIERRA, TANGO, UNIFORM, VICTOR, WHISKEY, X-RAY, YANKEE, ZULU.

If you are telling someone your name, it is your NAME, not your "personal". If you are telling someone where you live, it is your address, not your QTH, unless of course, you are using Morse Code. Same thing for QRU. You are asking if the other operator has anything for you so just say that. Don't make the other operator puzzle around the shack trying to figure out what the heck QRU means. Same thing for QRL, QRO, QTB etc. These terms are appropriate for Morse Code, not voice comms on FM. Please do NOT use the "10-code" on amateur radio. Not even 10-4! Q-signs or codes have their place in the CW mode, but they are not really appropriate for voice communications. By the way, a frequently heard term on amateur radio is the term "73". Note please that I said "73", not 73's. The term which is shorthand for "best regards" per the latest definition from the ARRL originated with telegraphers in the 19th century. It should not be pluralized. It is "73".

OK, I have made a pest out of myself for long enough. Just remember, the purpose is to get the message across clearly, not to confound us by trying too hard to sound like an old hand. When in doubt, just say it in plain English, that usually works best.

## **From the Treasurer..... Club Dues**

- 1) Pay dues through PayPal. Go to the MARC website for the link.
- 2) Sign up for Amazon Smile . Go to the website for directions. Please pass along to friends and family. Amazon sends us a check.
- 3) Sign up for Kroger. Go to the website for directions. Please pass along to friends and family. Kroger sends us a check.

Thanks ..... Chris, KC9VGQ

## **2021 Indiana ARRL Hamfest Schedule**

July 10

Auburn Hamfest

Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum - 1600 S. Wayne Street – Auburn

<http://W9OU.ORG>

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August 7

Elkhart Hamfest Northern Indiana Event Center - 21565 Executive Parkway

- Elkhart

<http://elkharteasthamfest>

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August 14

Hendricks County Tailgate Fest

Avon United Methodist Church - 6850 E. Highway 36 Avon, IN 46123

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November 13 & 14

Fort Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo

2021 - ARRL - Central Division Convention

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum – 4000 Parnell Ave – Fort Wayne

<http://www.fortwaynehamfest.com>

**Canceled** 2021 Hamfests

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February 6 Hendrick County Hamfest

February 26, 2021 - LaPorte Cabin Fever Hamfest

April 3, 2021 - Columbus Hamfest

May – Dayton, Ohio Hamvention

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ARRL Indiana Section

Section Manager: Jimmy L Merry Jr, KC9RPX [kc9rpx@arrl.org](mailto:kc9rpx@arrl.org)





## MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month at the Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.

See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

**W9MID Repeater:**

146.835/  
146.235 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

**Club Officers:**

President: Tim Aldridge - WC9G  
Vice President: Jacki Frederick – KI6QOG  
Secretary: Chris Read – W9OQ  
Treasurer: Chris Mazzarella – KC9VGQ  
Repeater Trustee - Chris Frederick – KQ9Y

**W9MID Repeater:**

443.525/  
448.525 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

**Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and ALL RADIO AMATEURS**  
**146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)**

**The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club**

**P.O. Box 836  
Franklin, Indiana  
46131**

**Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU**

*Please send your articles to my email: [n9siu@yahoo.com](mailto:n9siu@yahoo.com) no later than the 2nd week of the month.*



*Special thanks to New Hope Church for the use of their Activity room for meetings and testing.*